

April Fool's joke may leave you red-faced, but it's a good sign, expert says

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Although blushing after an April Fool's joke might worsen your embarrassment, there is a bright side, says a Duke University professor who is an expert on embarrassment and blushing.

“Everybody blushes to some degree,” said Mark Leary, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke. “It’s a sign that you’re attuned to the social norms. Those who don’t blush tend to be indifferent to behaving appropriately.”

Embarrassment arises when you present an image of yourself to others that you didn’t want to present, Leary said. And, even though falling for that April Fool’s trick might make you worry that others will view you badly, in fact, visible signs of embarrassment actually help your social situation, he said.

He said humans’ reaction to being embarrassed is similar to “appeasement behavior” in chimps -- the silly grin, the body language -- that tells others that the individual recognizes his or her transgression and asks for forgiveness.

“Other people like you better if you appear embarrassed,” Leary said.

Source: Duke University

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